

Jackson Park Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes for April 3, 2026, Jackson Park Field House

President Michael Scott called the meeting to order at 7:06pm. A quorum was present. The agenda was approved without amendment or objection. A motion to approve the minutes of two past meetings (June 1 and July 13, 2026), which were posted online prior to the meeting, was made by Louise McCurry, seconded by Mary Anton, and approved verbally without objection. No park district personnel were present to report. The treasurer reported a change in account balance, to \$4184.08, reflecting the authorized expense for an annual subscription to email blast platform, and that the required semi-annual financial report had been filed with the Chicago Parks Foundation.

Two committee reports were made. For Historic Bridges, Roger Deschner alerted the membership about a proposal to curtail federal Section 106 protections and public input practices, of the kind that have been used for all projects in Jackson Park to secure community input prior to changes to historic elements. This proposal could have a major impact, more will be shared at the next meeting. For Lawn Bowling, Jim Blissitt III shared that they have been hosting park youth on Mondays; partnering with Bowls USA; hosted the first evening lawn bowling event in the park in many years (the lights still work); and are competing in a tournament in Milwaukee next weekend.

Discussion then turned to the main agenda topic, a request from the Jackson Park Conservancy for JPAC to approve the installation of signage kiosks with maps and flyers in the park. Material related to this request was shared on the JPAC website ahead of the meeting. Jerry Levy presented on behalf of the Conservancy the following points:

- The Conservancy exists to raise money for park improvements, and view this as a first opportunity to collaborate with JPAC.
- They have long had flyers in a box on Wooded Isle, and thought it would be useful to provide a map and flyers elsewhere in the park.
- They raised funds and, after initial conversation with the Park District, proceeded to install two kiosks. However, they had not actually been granted permission to do so. One has since been removed, and after further review, the Park District asked that the Conservancy be consulted to offer a statement of approval for the plan.
- The map that was initially installed, and which was included in the electronic materials for our review, will not be used. The Park District is creating a new map that will be up-to-date and historically accurate.
- The intention is for the flyer to have a smaller version of the map, as well as a QR code allowing people to donate to park improvements.

During discussion, these points were raised:

- **JPAC wants the opportunity to review and offer input on the map.** Historical accuracy and inclusivity are important. The Frederick Douglass Monument must be included. The names of all historic bridges should be noted. The Hyde Park

Historical Society, and its president Brigid Maniates, would like to review the map. The map must be functionally accurate; it must not show the Darrow Bridge as open.

- The Obama Foundation has not been consulted on this project yet, and would like to be. Heather Gleason has been main contact person at Park District, along with Clem Taylor.
- These kiosks would fill an important deficit in wayfinding and make the park more welcoming. Conservancy volunteers stationed in park during OPC opening experienced many lost first-time visitors.
- Questions and concern about how fundraising works and where it goes: This was raised repeatedly, and the sense that emerged was that we will need further detail about exactly where the funds go, who controls how they are used, and how this is communicated. Confirm the following:
 - It seems that the Conservancy can be reimbursed for costs it incurs for installing the kiosks out of funds raised.
 - The funds raised can be used to fund ongoing production and replenishment of flyers
 - Funds beyond that can be used for other park improvements. Who directs these?
- Will JPAC be acknowledged on the signage or flyers? Should JPAC receive credit for supporting this initiative? Can the kiosks help inform the public about the opportunity to engage with JPAC?
- Concern was expressed about why JPAC was only approached so late in the process for this initiative, and how Park District has treated other signage requests compared to this one. We would hope for a more forthright and collaborative process in the future.

At the conclusion of discussion, a resolution was tabled authorizing President Michael Scott to write an email to the Park District signaling JPAC's support for the concept of installing these Conservancy-funded kiosks, with the provisos that JPAC must be engaged in shaping the content of the map, and that further discussion and clarification about the fundraising approach would need to take place. The resolution received many seconds, and a vote was taken by show of hands. 16 voted in favor, 1 abstention, none opposed.

Several announcements were shared, reinforcing items included in email blasts: the Park District is hiring for a seasonal Osaka Garden position with application closing August 7; JPAC members can use a code through September 3 for free tickets to the Anne Frank exhibit at GMSI; and the Park District participatory budgeting process is open for votes through August 27.

A motion was made to adjourn, seconded, and carried, and the meeting ended at 7:57pm.

Minutes submitted by Treasurer Eric Rogers.